

372 the island. Sheep dung was also used. In ancient times, when the population was far more dense, the fuel problem must have been serious. Yet the natives did not seem to worry about it. Cook (53, vol. 1, p. 292) saw twelve fires burning at the same place morning and evening. Natives burned the straps or tops of sugar cane, plantain heads, and probably branches from the numerous shrubs scattered about the island.

OVEN

354 Before the introduction of European cooking utensils, natives cooked (*ootu*) all their food in underground ovens (*umu*), similar to those in other parts of Polynesia. Wherever remains of settlements are found there are ancient ovens also.

[801] The ovens are pentagonal in shape, formed of five slabs, generally curbs taken from some house. The slabs are buried in the ground to varying depths and project only 10 or 15 cm. above the surface enclosing a space 2 feet in diameter. My principal informant called my attention to the fact that the stones of the ovens always numbered five or seven and that an odd number of stones was imposed by superstition. I noticed only one oven with six slabs on the island. A screen or covered roof protected the oven from the wind. (130, vol. 2, p. 256). This type of oven is no longer used.

Modern natives make earth ovens only when they are in camp or preparing a banquet.

354 A hole about 2 feet deep is dug, on the bottom of which are placed large stones covered with grass. On this first layer, stones the size of the fist are piled up in a heap with small branches, scraps of wood (*hukahuka*) and grass. Fire is set to the pile (*ka te umu* or *puhi te umu*). The glowing stones are evenly fitted (*uru*) and spread with two sticks handled like tongs. The food—meat, sweet potatoes, yams, taro—is placed (*lao*) in the oven on banana or ti leaves to prevent burning. More hot stones are spread against or above (*puapua*) the leaves protecting the food. Formerly bundles were covered (*pengopengo*) with grass (*tanetv*), today with a sack. Soil is shoveled (*tanu hai oone*) over the pit. After 2 hours the food is generally considered sufficiently cooked and is removed (*maoa*). To cook food well is *kukohope a te umu*. The entrails of the animals are roasted (*haiui*) on the glowing stones of the *umu*.

PREPARATION OF FOOD

252 Cooked food is never pounded on Easter Island, and probably never was in the past, since no food pounders have ever been found there. Breadfruit and taro are the staples in other parts of Polynesia and are mashed. Breadfruit does not grow on Easter Island and taro is far less important in diet than sweet potatoes which are never pounded. Pounding food requires a great deal of water and water has always been scarce on Easter Island.

231 Formerly the natives were reluctant to shed the blood of any animal. This may have had a religious background but it is more probable that the natives simply did not want to waste any blood. Chickens were strangled by twisting the neck; larger animals, such as goats and dogs, were suffocated by

252 burying the head in a hole or in smoke. The hair was then singed and, with-

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out further preparation, the animal was put into the oven (81, vol. 38, p. 131). Chickens were cooked by putting hot stones inside the body; they were never plucked beforehand (90, p. 46). 252

According to a tradition noted by Knoche (123, p. 182), for which I found no evidence, fish were boiled in the natural holes so commonly found on rocks. Raw fish is not eaten by modern natives, but a tradition points out that they used to do so a few generations ago.

Water, for washing new-born babies or sick people, is heated by throwing (tunu maea vera) glowing stones into a big calabash (kaha) full of water. 374 271

Sweet potatoes were generally baked in earth ovens. My informant told me that by means of hot stones they were sometimes boiled in big calabashes. 252 Today sweet potatoes are prepared in many ways, but they are still greatly appreciated when cooked underground.

Taro is cooked in the earth oven, fried, or boiled. Taro leaves (*raupa taro*), which are also cooked in the earth oven, constitute one of the most delicious foods of Easter Island.

Ti roots are no longer eaten but in former times they were cooked (86, p. 25): [262]

... The natives put them into a hole, wrapped with leaves and covered them with grass and hot stones. When the stones were getting cold, they were replaced by others, and so on during two or three days. The recompense of all that work is the facility to keep that fruit and its delicious flavor.

Tepano described the preparation of ti in almost the same terms, but he assured me that during the three to five days the food remained in the earth it was necessary to light a fire above the oven. Because of the present abundance of sugar, the ti is no longer a delicacy.

Bananas were ripened quickly for festivals by warming them in a long ditch. A fire was lighted in the ditch, similar to that kindled in ordinary oven cooking. A layer of fresh earth was spread to extinguish the flames, the walls of the ditch were lined with fresh banana leaves (*rito*) and the bananas deposited in the ditch were covered with earth. Three or four days later the fruits were ripe.

In former times arrowroot was eaten after it had been baked either upon or in the earth oven. It is no longer grown on the island.

Little salt, if any, was used to flavor the food, and even today the natives do without it. It has been noted that they do not need salt, since they drink brackish water and absorb air impregnated with sea salt. 263

Seabirds' eggs were once consumed in great quantities and the natives are still very fond of them. The few islanders that accompanied us on the expedition to Motu-nui ate more than a hundred eggs within half an hour. 262

Nowadays cooking is generally Chilean and maize is an important food in the diet. 252 262 177

PRESENT-DAY EASTER ISLANDERS

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not as complete as they might be, and may tend to be weighted in that all four men^[115] were related in one way or another. However this paper, and one on trading tech^[124] niques which I hope to publish at a future date, show quite clearly that advanced¹⁷⁷ acculturation on the island is, for the most part, only material culture deep and has as yet penetrated only sporadically into the social organization of the people.

BIRTH

Except for a ceremony at the birth of a first child, there appears to be no⁸⁴⁴ regularized ritual for births as such. At the present moment an expectant mother¹⁷⁷ either goes to the Naval-run hospital for delivery, or stays at home where her child is delivered with the aid of a midwife. I could learn of no pre-natal or post-parture taboos enforced on either the parents or the child. The rubbing of a^[846] fine red iron oxide powder into the baby's navel may have once had ceremonial^{827]} significance but is now explained as merely an aid in the drying up of the umbilical cord.

It is apparently only the first child, especially a boy child, whose birth is⁸⁵² fraught with a danger that must be assuaged by ceremony. Once the ceremony has been completed, however, a time for general celebration and feasting is immediately at hand.

Upon the occasion of the first birth to a married couple the father-in-law of the child's mother immediately prepares a small *umu*, i.e., a meal prepared in a pit^[252] oven, which is allowed to cook through the night. At the break of dawn on the following day the immediate families of both the child's parents open the *umu* but do not touch the inclosed food until the new mother has first partaken of it to "bring luck to her baby." After she has eaten this token meal, these relatives finish this initial *umu* and immediately begin preparations for a large *umu* feast for their friends and relatives in celebration of the birth. As with the inter-familial^[574] exchange of gifts at the time of a wedding, the respective families of the new parents each prepare their own *umu* and, upon its completion, present it to the opposite family, after which both meals are pooled for the general feasting of friends and relatives. Since such a feast may have to provide for a large portion^[596] of the population, each member of the extended family may be called upon to furnish a quantity of food in the form of chickens, eggs, *camotes* or sweet potatoes, etc. Even friends may be called upon and "if they have food beyond their needs they will give to the *umu*." Each friend or relative coming to the feast brings^[431] with him, or her, a small *umu* gift for the new mother. This usually consists of a small, wrapped bundle containing chicken or, perhaps, *camote*. It was never made

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532 a good 30 feet in height and broad in proportion. This perplexity ceased, however, with the discovery, on removing a piece of the stone, that they were formed out of clay or some kind of rich earth, and that small smooth flints had been stuck over afterwards, which are fitted very closely and neatly to each other, so as to make up the semblance of a human figure¹. Moreover, one saw reaching downwards from the shoulders a slight elevation or prominence which represented the arms, for all the statues seem to convey the idea that they were hung about with a long robe from the neck right down to the soles of the feet. They have on the head a basket heaped up with flints painted white deposited in it². It was incomprehensible to
- 252 us how these people cook their food, for no one was able to
- 415 perceive or find that they had any earthen pots, pans, or vessels. The only thing which appeared to us was that they scrape holes in the ground with their hands, and lay large and small flint pebbles in them (for we saw no other kinds of stone): then, having got dried litter from the fields and laid over the pebbles, they set fire to it and in a little time brought us a boiled fowl to eat very neatly wrapped round in a kind of rush, clean and hot. Though
- 123 they were thanked by means of signs, we had quite enough business in hand to look after our people so as to keep order among them, and prevent any affront being offered; and also that in the event of any struggle occurring they should not allow themselves to be taken by surprise, for although these people showed us every sign of friendship,

¹ "Some of the gentlemen who travelled over the island, and examined many of them, were of opinion, that the stone of which they were made was different to any other they saw on the island, and had much the appearance of being factitious." Cook, Bibl. no. 16.

² Roggeveen's description of the statues seems to show that he never got close to one of them, but saw them only from a distance of some hundreds of yards. His 'basket' was doubtless one of the coronoïd cylinders of tufaceous rock by which most of the figures were surmounted.

5: Roggeveen T-5 (1721-1722)1908
OY2 Easter Islanders OY2

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yet the experience of others has taught us that one may not put too much trust in any Indians, as recounted in the *Journal of the Nassau Fleet*, which lost seventeen men on one occasion through the willingness of the natives of *Terra de Feu* to help being mistaken for a proof that they were well disposed. 23

We then, being baulked from making any sufficiently detailed inquiry, concluded that they must have large hollow flint-stones under the soil, which hold water when they set about boiling anything, and that afterwards they arch it over with stones on which to light the fire, and thus boil their food by means of the heat thrown downwards, until tender. It is also very remarkable that we saw no more than two or three old women, those were wearing a garment reaching from the waist down to below their knees, and another slung on the shoulders: yet so that the skin covering their pendant breasts was bare. But young women and lasses did not come forward amongst the crowd, so that one must believe the jealousy of the men had moved them to hide them away in some distant place in the island¹. Their houses or huts are without any ornamentation, and have a length of fifty feet and a width of fifteen; the height being nine feet, as it appeared by guess². The construction of their walls, as we saw in the framework of a new building, is begun with stakes which are stuck into the ground and secured straight upright, across which other long strips of wood which I may call laths are lashed, to the height of four or five, thus completing the framework 291 609 342

¹ "They either have but few females among them, or many were restrained from making their appearance, during our stay," says Cook, "for though we saw nothing to induce us to believe the men were of a jealous disposition, or the women afraid to appear in public, something of this kind was probably the case." Cook, Bibl. no. 16.

² "The largest house I saw was about sixty feet long, eight or nine feet high in the middle, and three or four at each end, its breadth at these parts was nearly equal to its height." Cook, Bibl. no. 16.

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beads, but they always threw them away with contempt, as far as ever they could. Whatever else they saw about us, they were desirous of possessing, though they had nothing to give in return. Their number was now decreased nearly to one half, many of them having probably gone home to their dinners; however, the number of women was always remarkably small in proportion to the men, there being not above twelve or fifteen at our first landing, and about six or seven when we embarked again. They were neither reserved nor chaste, and for the trifling consideration of a small piece of cloth, some of our sailors obtained the gratification of their desires. Their features were mild enough, and the large pointed cap gave them the air of professed wantons.

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We returned on board the ship before noon, and found it at anchor, though we had left it under sail. The fresh fruits and roots which we brought on board, were immediately distributed as far as they would go, and proved a most seasonable refreshment to our sick. We tasted the fowls, which seemed to have been dressed under-ground, by means of hot stones being wrapped up in green leaves, in the manner practised amongst all the nations of the South Sea, whom we had hitherto visited. The potatoes were of a gold-yellow colour, and as sweet as carrots, therefore not equally palatable to us all; however they were extremely nourishing, and very antiscorbutic. The juices of this,

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TE PITO TE HENUA OR EASTER ISLAND.

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In place of plank floors the bare earth is strewn with dried bulrushes and grass to the depth of several inches, and as this litter is rarely renewed, the result is obvious. Occasionally a bunk may be found knocked up at one end of the single apartment of which the house consists, or, as in the more pretentious houses, a square bedstead may be seen, built of planed, unpainted wood, with a wild attempt at scroll carving about the head and foot boards. Chairs and tables are unknown luxuries. 342
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The same house is often occupied by several families, or by several generations of the same family, but as the individuals composing these are never very numerous there is no overcrowding. 362

A few of the more ordinary cooking utensils may occasionally be seen, but as a rule the natives, as is generally the case among the inhabitants of the South Sea Islands, prepare their food in stone ovens in the following manner: A circular excavation is made in the earth outside of the dwelling, several feet in diameter and a foot or two in depth, which is then neatly lined with a porous stone of some sort. Other stones are loosely laid in, and a quantity of dry wood or brush of any kind, with more stones, piled on. The wood is then set on fire, and, when the stones have become sufficiently heated, the loose ones are taken out, and the brands and cinders removed, leaving the lining of heated stones intact. Over these is then spread a layer of banana, breadfruit, or other large leaves to keep the food from contact with ashes. The food, taro, yams, sweet potatoes, fowl, short, or "long pig," or whatever else there may be, previously prepared for cooking, is then placed on the layer of leaves, piece by piece, until all are in position, when the ground of food is carefully covered over with several thicknesses of large green leaves to prevent any dirt from falling in among the edibles. The heated stones, previously removed, are then placed in position all over the mass and finally a thick layer of fine, dry earth, ashes, and cinders is piled over all, these being for the purpose of retaining the heat. In from two to three or four hours the baking is finished, and, barring the "long pig," perhaps, a more healthful and toothsome method of preparing and cooking food, when superintended by an expert native Samoan chef, for example, could not, in the estimation of the writer, who has had opportunities for judging, be devised. The thought suggests itself here that the "clambakes" of our Atlantic States are a feeble imitation of this style of cooking among the Islanders. 252

As wood or solid fuel of any kind is a most rare commodity on Rapa Nui the natives are compelled to use brush, twigs, and trash cast up on their island by the sea, anything, in fact, of an inflammable nature which they can pick up. They even economize the dried droppings of the cattle, as the Arab does those of his camel, for this purpose, and I saw great basketfuls of these carefully stowed away in their houses for future use. 372

They have no fixed time for eating, and while their *mea*, as may be [264]
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342 and it is very rare to find them still in place, as they were comparatively light, weighing from one to two hundredweight, and easily carried off. Even the heavier stones were at times seized upon as booty in enemy raids; one measuring 15 feet was pointed out to us near an ahu on the south coast, which had been brought all the way from the north side of the island. In the middle of one side of the house was a doorway, and in the front of it a porch, which had also stone foundations. The whole space in front of the house was neatly paved with water-worn boulders, in the same manner as the ahu. This served as a stoep on which to sit and talk, but its practical utility was obvious to ourselves in the rainy seasons, when the entrance to our tents and houses became deep in mud (fig. 84A). Near the main abode was a thatched house which contained the native oven, the stones of which are often still in place. The cooking was done Polynesian fashion: a hole about 15 inches deep is lined with flat stones, a fire is made within, and, when the stones are sufficiently heated, the food, wrapped up in parcels, is stacked within and covered with earth, a fire being lighted on the top.

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Many of the surviving old people were born and brought up in these houses, which are known as "haré paenga." The old man, for example, before alluded to, who was brought out to Raraku, roved round the mountain telling with excitement who occupied the different houses in the days of his youth. He gave a particularly graphic description of the scene after sundown, when all were gathered within for the evening meal. In addition to the main door, there was, he said, an opening near each end by which the food was passed in and then from hand to hand; as perfect darkness reigned, a sharp watch had to be kept that it all reached its proper owners. He lay down within the old foundations to show how the inhabitants slept. This was parallel to the long axis of the house, the head being towards the door; the old people were in the centre in couples, and the younger ones in the ends. The largest of these houses, which had some unique features, measured 122 feet in length, with an extreme width of 12 feet; but some 50 feet by 5 feet or 6 feet are more usual measurements. They were often shared by related families and held anything from ten to thirty, or even more, persons.

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The food consisted of the usual tropical produce, such as